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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 28 (2011) 867 – 871

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

WCETR 2011

The use of blogs in teaching and learning translation

Masoud Azizinezhad ^{a *}, Masoud Hashemi ^b^aMA in Translation Studie Department of English, Toyserkan Branch , Islamic Azad University, Toyserkan, 6581685184, Iran^bMA in Teaching English as a Foreign Languages, Department of English, Toyserkan Branch , Islamic Azad University, Toyserkan, 6581685184, Iran

Abstract

One of the major tasks of a teacher is, nowadays, believed to be trying to improve digital competence of students so that they are able to use ICT in the modern community. Blogging is having a weblog on the worldwide web and to maintain or add new entries to a blog, which can serve well to the pedagogical purposes via diverse and creative activities through communication. As an educational tool, blogs are one of the user-friendly technological means that may be integrated in a multi-aspect manner to include all learners in the process of learning. There are many ways to use blogging in teaching and learning. One can use an existing blog to provide information and insights. Classroom management, collaboration, discussions and having comprehensive archived student portfolios are among some benefits of using blogging as a teaching tool. Doing this in the realm of translation teaching could be made possible via integrating the use of these technologies while doing different activities across the curriculum. In this article attempts has been made to investigate the possible the advantages and possible difficulties of using weblogs in translator training from teachers' points of view and the underlying reasons for these difficulties.

Keywords: Technology, Teaching translation, blogging, Translation, Digital competence

1. Introduction

Blogs have an important presence on the Internet and they are known by users. Teachers know about this tool, but they barely appreciate it as an educational tool. A minority of teachers have used the web design, which can enable the use of Webquest, however, the process of designing a website is complicated, because we should upload files to servers, there are problems with links, frames, buttons and we a need to know how to use html code in some cases. Moreover, Blogs take full advantage of a website and it is really easy to design it, once we have an account, we can easily add image and text without any problem. We recognize various pedagogical possibilities concerning use of Blogs through file management, use of video, images and all kind of benefits relating interaction and communication. We therefore developed an analysis of their use by teachers, taking into account teacher's attitudes about technologies, and ICT tools, comparing all these with the implementation of Blogs.

* Masoud Azizinezhad. Tel.: +0-98-918-351-410-1; fax: +0-988524223288.

E-mail address: mazizinezhad@gmail.com.

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2. What are blogs?

Blogs are **web logs** that are updated on a regular basis by their author. They can contain information related to a specific topic. In some cases blogs are used as daily diaries about people's personal lives, political views, or even as social commentaries. The truth of the matter is that blogs can be shaped into whatever you, the author, want them to be.

Blogs give you an opportunity to write content that is unique to you and your practice. While some people are uncomfortable with self promotion, your blog gives you an occasion to interact with your visitors while promoting who you are and what you do.

Today blogs are being used for all sorts of purposes. You have companies that use blogs to communicate and interact with customers and other stake holders. Newspapers incorporate blogs to their main website to offer a new channel for their writers. Individuals also created blogs to share with the world their expertise on specific topics. And so on.

Wikipedia defines Blog as a type of website or part of a website; they are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other via widgets on the Blogs and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites.

Blogging has emerged among a variety of web-based instructional possibilities as a leader, in part because it allows students the ability to interact in a more public venue, sharing their thoughts, ideas, interpretations, hopes, and fears with anyone willing to spend time looking on the internet (Martindale, 2005) The recent emergence of this tool using the Internet, means that we are beginning to understand and appreciate its possibilities, which are numerous and very advantageous. The possibility of designing your own site without having to upload files via file transfer protocol (FTP), simply inserting images and text enables students themselves can have a blog for its ease of creation.

Some researches (Amoros, 2007), note on the design characteristics of Weblogs, which are hypertext, dynamism, creativity and originality. The hypertext refers to the ability to read through links, it differs from a sense of linearity from classic textbooks. We access to the information requested through hyperlinks, it is noteworthy that dynamism is determined by the ability to change and update the Blog, including new issues, or updates to existing topics. With regard to creativity and originality of the Blog, they are determined by the idea of creating something new, without falling into the routine.

2.1 How do you get people to read your blog?

One of the ways to attract readers to your blog is to title your postings so that you can get their attention and draw them in to your blog. Take into consideration the basics of Search Engine Optimization (SEO), when you are writing in your blog, so that you can bring in traffic not only to your blog but to your site. A prime example is the December 10th blog entry for sbplasticsurgeon.com entitled "Botox Safety". Dr. Lowenstein has placed tags such as Botox, Plastic Surgery, Plastic Surgery in Santa Barbara on his blog thereby boosting his SEO presence.

2.2 Where Did Blogs Come From?

The roots of blogging can be traced back to the mid 1990's. Who the very first blogger was is actually unclear, as the art of blogging did not really take hold until 1999. The original "weblogs" were link-driven sites with personal

commentaries. The very first blogs were human guided Internet web tours. While initially thought of as diaries or online journals, blogs have evolved into the latest fresh web content.

3. The use of blogs in teaching language and translation

As Bogucki (2010) states along with confrontation of the translation and communication industries with new technologies, the next step consists in educating translators in being conversant in the more “spendable” skills, to exploit the same tacit knowledge that people in the field tend to share through discussion and personal interactions. Special attention should then be given to social aspects (collaboration and sharing through social networks, wikis and blogs) in a “Wikinomics” or crowdsourcing³ perspective, and translation students should be introduced to web-based translation environments, controlled languages, content management, and workflow management systems. We appreciated educational and training benefits from several researches, including promotion of cooperative learning, motivation and tools concerning literacy and ability to manage information. Even from other perspectives, they have a certain application, as Torres (2009) assure “Blogs can be means to attract a few users to do homework and to support academic activities outside the classroom, the exception can be found when a teacher uses a referenced Blog to support his classroom”, although this author acknowledges that they are not very used to learn. There are several Standards given by NETS for students (2007), they are a reference in pedagogical use of technologies in relation to students abilities in ICT, i.e. what students should be able to do to learn effectively and live productively in an increasingly digital world.

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Communication and Collaboration
3. Research and Information Fluency
4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
5. Digital Citizenship
6. Technology Operations and Concepts

As some researches (Goh, et. al. 2010) argue, it is indeed ironic that while the students in this study enjoy reading views expressed by other bloggers, they exhibit a lack of a sense of belonging to a community of learners by not contributing their own views freely. Clearly, this may have implications on individual reflective learning and collaboration with others. These student behaviors in the virtual realm are worthy of further investigation, after all Blogs may bring new learning or *unlearning* habits, as well as varying degrees of satisfaction from the learning experience.

There are therefore many advantages concerning teaching language and literature, which enhance reading comprehension and writing which are crucial for translating. In this sense Amorós (2007) found that through this tool it is possible to access to literary text, even with manipulation of the text, with access to multiple resources such as libraries or dictionaries.

The disadvantages can be given when creating the Blog, the complexity and need to be familiar in these environments, because there we need to use other options to add or embed sound, videos or presentations. There is some evidence highlighted by Gonzalez-Serna (Gonzales, 2004), in relation to the basis of communication in educational contexts, and indicates that it is not appropriate for some resources and implies a certain disorder.

Another possible disadvantage suggest that you must be careful with activities that require students to answer on the Blog, as claimed Brescia (2004) , perhaps the biggest challenge to Blogging is when instructors take away the voluntary nature of participation and begin requiring postings and responses to other postings. Although the contact can still promote intellectual development, the temptation for students is to respond simply for the sake of responding and to finish the requirement rather than processing information and learning for example how to translate. In this regard, (Goh, et. al. 2010) concludes that one of the major challenges for educators using Blogging as a pedagogical tool for teaching is to get students to express their views and opinions more freely.

Each type of task can be approached from activities that the teacher uploads to the Blog, which enables children working with them at home or at school. They can use several options, as pictures, audio or video, and take

advantages of communication possibilities, language development and students' participation by interacting through comments giving opinions and discussing topics.

Examples of contact between more remote locations at home and abroad soon came to light. As the availability and reliability of the equipment increased so did the opportunities for teachers to try out new communications-based activities" (Pritchard, 2007).

Brescia (2004) assures that "There is, however, no indication that blogs are effective supplements to the teaching-learning process", and certainly not intended to supplant the teaching and learning processes that occur at present, however exploit the fact the advantages provided by this tool and to strengthen the commitment in its use, an application will enable best practice in the classroom. The report on the implementation and use of ICT in primary and secondary schools (Mec, 2007) shows that there are some differences in the perceived competition for boys and girls, especially in more technical activities. They say that boys know better how to install and start programs or designing a Web page, while a higher percentage of girls are competent in participating in chats, forums and Blogs, they use email or the use of information existing on the Internet.

Allowing students to comment on each others' blogs may have some potential draw-backs. Students may not be as open to sharing their thoughts and opinions if they know someone other than the professor is reading it. Hurlburt (2008) notes that these feelings of insecurity are usually temporary and vanish as the students get more comfortable with the class and their peers.

4. Conclusion

While blogs can be useful, it is important to note that they are just tools and not the objective itself. They are not for everyone or for all classes and need to be made an integral part of the course design. However, the use of blogs as a learning tool seems to be low-cost with high-returns. While more research needs to be done as to how blogs can more effectively be used, it is a given that technology will continue to influence learning. According to Diana Oblinger, "Already, our focus has shifted from teaching to learning...Much of what we have done in the past has been constrained by the prevailing conception of the classroom, but the lecture and the lab are only two ways to learn...The next step may be the integration of knowledge management and e-learning systems to augment current practices" (Morrison & Oblinger, 2002, p. 3).

Our experiences in using classroom blogs have been overwhelmingly positive. While student acceptance of technology in the classroom requires its perceived usefulness and ease of use (Martins & Kellermanns, 2004), students do tend to learn best when they need information that they can put to use immediately. Blogs are an effective and efficient method of allowing students to access information as it is needed and to make connections between explicit knowledge from textbooks and tacit knowledge gained as students see how others can and are using the knowledge being shared. Blogs also introduce students to online learning communities so they can access and evaluate information, and construct new learning paradigms for themselves. Finally, effectively modeling ways to use blogs as a teaching and learning tool is a useful skill for our students to have as they embark on their journey of life-long learning.

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